3748

A

LETTER

To the Reverend

Mr. *John Henley*, M. A.

A

LETTER

To the Reverend

Mr. *John Henley*, M. A.

CONCERNING

His Novel Project:

WHEREIN

His Design is fully expoſed.

LONDON:

Printed for T. WARNER, *at the* Black-Boy, *in* Pater-noſter-Row. 1726.

Price Four Pence.

12.

BIBLIOTHECA·POLONA

Rev. Sir,

AS you have thought fit, in your Underſtanding, to make a new Sect, or Separation from the Church of *ENGLAND*, and have accordingly qualified yourſelf, by taking the Oaths at *Hicks-Hall*, in Order to have the Benefit of the *Act of Toleration*; and now luſtily cry out, after the Old Presbyterian Cant, for Liberty and Property, and free Choice in Matters Religious, for a very good Reaſon, to wit, for the Sake of the ——; ſo, Sir, you cannot but excuſe me who takes no more Liberty with you, than you

you do with all the World, though there is no Occaſion for me to go and qualify myſelf at *Hicks-Hall*, that I may be capable of imploying my Pen in writing to you. The Preſs, you know, is free, and I have a juſt Right to communicate my Thoughts to you, or the Publick. However, Mr. Orator, or whatever elſe you call yourſelf, Maſter Rhetorician, Grand Elocutor, or *Britannia*'s Great Academiſt, I ſhall not ſtand to ask your Leave, whether I ſhall publiſh this Letter, or no, yet I hope you will accept of the Dedication.

YOU, Sir, have alarmed the whole World, with the Tumult of your Performances, [to what End, to get ———.] I ſay, with the Noiſe, becauſe until *July* the Third nothing of it appeared ſave a Plan. The firſt Plan that was publiſhed, was a Plan of an Academy, excluſive of an Anti-Eccleſiaſtical Inſtitution, which I thought was ſomewhat feaſible and reaſonable in its Deſign. But it was not long after, that I was preſented with one, with an Inſtitution of an Oratory, otherwiſe by you ſtiled, A Church; by no leſs a famous Man for good U———g, *&c.* than the Rev. Mr. *John Henley*, M. A. I confeſs it ſtartled me, but at that Time,

I did not know the Reaſon for this new Inſtitution, which now I do. The Reaſon holds good with you, Sir, becauſe you know you do it for the ready ——. This anſwered all Objections with me, for no ſooner had I raiſed one, which I apprehended had ſomewhat of Weight in it, but I found myſelf thus replied, That the Deſign was for the Good of Mankind in general; and to get to Yourſelf —— in particular.

TO this End, and for no other ſubſtantial Reaſon, you was pleaſed to advertiſe us to this Effect, That the Oratory would be opened *July* 3. and that if I or any other Perſon, would come to your Oratory, or Place of Publick Worſhip, we muſt give One Shilling to the Door-keeper, for the Seats were a perſonal Property. A very fine Story indeed! and ſuch a one, that is not be parralleled, that we ſhould pay a Shilling before we can worſhip GOD! Though indeed to ſpeak the Truth, 'tis much more like a Theatre than a Place of Worſhip: For firſt of all, when we come up, there is a Bar much after the ſame manner as in a Play-Houſe: Secondly, a Hatch ſpiked: And Thirdly, a Man to take Money, otherwiſe, you ſay, we are not intituled to a Seat in your [theatrical]

Oratory: This famous Place, I found afterwards was over the Market-House, up in the highest Loft, a fit Place for Worship! I soon thought it was all of a Piece, ——

BUT as I designed to be one of your Audience, so I had the Luck, though there were few in Town, a Wonder! to get one of your Liturgies, and here I found we were presented with a Bit made up for the Day, taken out, as we are told, of the Spurious Constitutions of *Clement*. No thanks owe we to you for this your Performance, since we have a much better *Liturgy* of our own, and are not beholden to Mr. *Henley* the Elocutor for his.

YOU tell us in the Title to your Liturgy, that it is the *Primitive Liturgy for the Use of the Oratory*; that is, you mean, the first that you intend to make use of: For you do not tell us, that this Liturgy is the very Liturgy which the Ancient Church in the five first Centuries used word for word, but on the contrary, that it is made up of a Collection of Prayers out of the *Constitutions*, here one and there one, just as you fancied them. However, you tell us very ingenuously, *That your Liturgy is not necessary*, true indeed: Because we have

have already a *full, regular and compendious* Liturgy, *taken entirely from Scripture, and the Writings of the Primitive Orthodox Fathers*, inſtituted by our Pious Anceſtors for the Service of GOD. When this our moſt Excellent Liturgy ſhall, by proud Luciferian Spirits be expelled, even then it will be too ſoon to admit yours. But if at all, then only, if ever, it will be either neceſſary or expedient.

YOU are pleaſed to tell us, *Pref. p.* 5. "That the Method of the uſual Service is "preſerved, and that what is ſcriptural "and primitive is retained. Prolixity and "Repetition are avoided." So that the Rule or Method of your Compoſition of your primitive Liturgy is according to the Liturgy of our Eſtabliſhed Church. A very good Rule to walk by, and wiſely choſen by you, for there is no better in the World. A large Part being both ſcriptural and primitive, which is, by you, retained. But what follows? why you tell us, that Prolixity and Repetition are avoided. Prolixity is the Word: Well then now for it, Your Great Apoſtolical Thankſgiving is very ſhort, according to you, tho' it contains Fifteen Pages, from 33 to 47: And the Thankſgiving in the Liturgy of the Church of *ENGLAND* is very long

though it hardly contains Thirty Lines. A fine Story indeed, but Jeſuit like, to charge others with Prolixity, when you are the only Perſon who are guilty.

BUT in order to ſupply (*Ib. p.* 5.) what is not ſcriptural in our Liturgy, we have the ſpurious Conſtitutions, called Apoſtolical, foſtered upon us, and be it Senſe or Nonſenſe, Good or Bad, Modeſt or Immodeſt, we muſt down with it, and why? becauſe it is Primitive, or becauſe Mr. *Henley* the Orator wants ———. And yet I am apt to think that that Part of our Liturgy which you ſay, is not ſcriptural, is as ſcriptural as thoſe of the *Conſtitutions.*

NEXT you go on to tell us, *p.* 5. what Religion you are of: Which indeed we ſhall be very glad to know. You ſay, "That the Religion of the Primitive "Church, according to the four firſt Ge- "neral Councils is your Religion, and "that is the Religion of the Church of "*England.* So that the Church of *Eng-* "*land* is with you, and that you will not "deviate from her." But if any one ſhould enquire what Perſuaſion you are of, *Prof. p.* 7. it is, "that which was in Being "at the Revolution, that is, He that judg-

"eth

" eth himſelf not to depend upon another " Congregation." But notwithſtanding all this, *Pref. p.* 8. You tell us, " That your " Scheme is far from being novel, or giving " Riſe to a new Sect." How theſe are agreeable one to another, I am at a Loſs to comprehend. In ſhort, I think your Deſign is to raiſe a new Sect, to purſue your own left-handed Ends, and get Wealth which is the Main of your Deſign, and you value not what Lengths you run, ſo be, you can gain it: But what will you do, when neither your Elocution nor your Wealth will do you any Good, when you ſhall be ſummoned to appear before your Maſter in Heaven, whom you now rebell againſt. I had almoſt darted out this Text at you, [*Wo to the World becauſe of Offences, but wo to that Man by whom the Offence cometh*] but I happened to look upon the laſt Paragraph of your Preface which reverted ſerves me as well as you, if not better.

TO conclude, there is no Man but muſt be an Enemy to this Inſtitution who is either a Chriſtian, or a Friend to Religion. For it is deſigned to give Offence and Diſturbance to all, only to be a common Benefit to the Inſtitutor. If Science and Literature, if Love of Truth, Candor, impartial Thinking, Conſcience, Peace and Liberty,

Liberty, be valuable Things, they are not promoted in the Plan of the Oratory.

NEXT to this, we have your Rubricks, which are very novel, for there is no Antiquity in them. You cannot pretend that they are the Rubricks of the Primitive Church. You would not diſgrace our Ancient Fathers with ſuch Non-ſenſe, dogmatical Opinions, or conceited Rules. No, they are the Brats of your Brain, and publiſhed upon your own Conceit.

AND now follows your Scripture-Sentences, which are as wiſely choſen as your Rubricks are inſtituted, calculated for no other End but to ſtir up Diſſenſion; and all this you have done to defile the Inhabitants of the Earth, to engage them to tranſgreſs the Law, and change the Ordinances which have been inſtituted by GOD and Good Men. Our Scripture-Sentences in the *Liturgy* of the Church of *England*, are full of Peace, Goodneſs, and Mercy, beautifully and piouſly choſen to promote the Good of Souls. The meaneſt Capacity may eaſily diſcern by comparing theſe Scripture-Sentences with thoſe of our Eſtabliſhed *Liturgy*, that there is no Occaſion for a new Set. And if our novel Liturgiſt had

had been as wiſe here as in other Places, where he has made uſe of the Church Liturgy, as in *Te Deum*, *Venite*, and the like, he would have made a much better Choice.

BUT becauſe you affect Singularity, and think that your own Works or Words are the beſt, we are, *P.* 19. preſented with a new Exhortation, and a rare one it is! Choice Matter! But who thanks you for it? Have we not a better of our own, I leave all the World to judge, whether you have mended it or no.

NEXT follows your new Confeſſion, *P.* 20. I ſhall only ſay here, That whoever will take the Pains to compare this with our Eſtabliſhed Confeſſion, will ſoon ſee, how exceedingly far more pious, beautiful, and uſeful our Confeſſion is, than this.

AND, *P.* 25. we have a new Abſolution given us. And what is moſt obſervable in this, is, that if we bring forth worthy Fruits of Penance, we ſhall be abſolved by Mr. *Henley*. This might have been ſaid by a Papiſt, but ill became Mr. *Inſtitutor* unleſs he deſigns Penance to ſuperſede Repentance. If the Gains from this Project doth not ariſe to your Satisfaction, and

and you ſhall be obliged to let it drop; I would adviſe you to go to a Confeſſionary, confeſs your Faults, and bring forth worthy Fruits of Penance.

WHAT follows in *P.* 26. is taken out of the Eſtabliſhed Liturgy, ſave only that at the Doxology we have an Aſteriſm to tell us, that ſome (*Arians* I ſuppoſe) have ſaid, that the Old Doxology is different to that uſed by us. But you tell us, that you do not yet preſume to decide this.

TO paſs over the 27th and 28th Pages, which contain two Collects taken out of the ſpurious *Conſtitutions*, we find a new *Litany* at *P.* 29, to 32. intituled, *A ſhort Scripture-Litany comprehending all the Matter of the larger.* We thank you for nothing, good Sir: A clipped Litany inſtead of our moſt pious one. Abridgments are never valued by Men of good Senſe, however they go down with thoſe who love Money.

AND now becauſe you would avoid Prolixity or Tediouſneſs in your Devotions, you have offered to us, as neceſſary to cure the Prolixity of our own Thankſgiving, 15 Pages, from 33 to 47. a *Great Apoſtolical Thankſgiving.* Beſides the Prolixity, Tediouſneſs and Length, which rendered it tireſome

tireſome and burdenſome to the Audience, I ſhall only obſerve, *P.* 46. an Expreſſion, which if you had had a Grain of Modeſty in you, you would have omitted, for ſpeaking of the Formation of Man and all his Parts, you conclude, "And all theſe Members "doſt thou form from a little Drop in the "Womb." Sure you will not ſay, this is the Apoſtles. They are, I am ſure, no more the Authors of thoſe Prayers or Expreſſions than I who live in this Seventeenth Century.

FROM *P.* 49, to 56. you give us a Bit of a Service for the Altar, but Maſter *Henley*, I nor any Perſon elſe will give you Thanks for it, ſince we have a compleat One, which infinitely exceeds yours in Goodneſs.

WHAT follows, *P.* 57 to 63. is an *Evening-Service*, which deſerves as little Commendation as any of the reſt.

AND upon the Whole, the moſt beautiful Parts of Mr. *Henley*'s Bit of a Liturgy, is taken out of the Liturgy of our Church, as the *Venite*, the *Pſalms*, and the *Te Deum*, the *Lord's-Prayer*, the *Apoſtles Creed*, the *Nicene Creed*, and the *Verſicles*, with the Prayer of *Chryſoſtom*, *The Grace*, &c. and the

Benediction. But becauſe Mr. *Henley* was willing to make ſome Alteration, therefore he expelled our moſt excellent Prayers, and has ſubſtituted obſolete Ones in their room, and what is the Reaſon, to ſell it for a Shilling.

IN fine your whole Project is to get Money, to diſgrace Religion, and to inſtil into the Minds of Men baſe Principles.

TO ſay nothing of the Invective which you held forth in your Oratory, its Baſeneſs, *&c.* come I to obſerve the Plan, where you ſay, that whoever ſhall be Patrons in ſo good [I ſay, bad] a Cauſe, their Venerable Aſhes ſhall be commemorated, and a Day ſet apart in your Kalendar, for their Anniverſary Commemoration. Sure you think you have Papiſts not Proteſtants to deal with. Will you not alſo for a ſmall Sum pray their Souls out of Purgatory? And after you are dead, muſt not a Day be ſet apart for the Commemoration of your Venerable Aſhes, and a Time allotted to pray your Soul out of Purgatory? I grant, Sir, you may wiſh ſuch a Service could be done for you. But alas! 'tis in vain!

UPON the Whole, whoever knows any Thing of the Matter may with half an Eye ſee through your Deſign, and view at once that Money is the God whom you worſhip, that this your Religion is calculated for Gain, to corrupt the Principles of Mankind, and to impoſe upon the World. Therefore none will become your Votaries who are Men of Senſe. None who can diſtinguiſh Good and Evil, Light and Darkneſs,

THE whole Performance on *July* 3. both Morning and Afternoon was ridiculous: The Reader's Performance excepted, who for the Leſſon choſe 1 *John* ii. where the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Antichriſts which ſhould ſtart up in theſe latter Days; for there was a dull Clark, and an over-active theatrical Preacher. This produced a ſneering and laughing. And to ſay no more, the Place was more like a Theatre than a Place of Worſhip.

I am, SIR,

Your humble Servant, &c.